

**Rag & Bone Puppet Theatre**

*Teacher's guide for*

# Felicity Falls



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## Dear Teacher

Welcome to *Felicity Falls*. The show is primarily meant to be fun, funny and interesting, but we hope that it can also be a springboard for lots of learning opportunities, and that this study guide can suggest a few of them.

Students may have questions about us, our company, and how we put the show together; if they do, you'll find some of the answers here. There's also some information about what the animals in the show are like in real life; a vocabulary list; and a synopsis of the entire show, which you could read to your class, either before or after the performance. Finally, we're giving you one of the stories in a storybook form. You could read it to your class, let the older ones read it themselves, cut and paste pages into a notebook for the students to illustrate, paste pages onto their drawings for a display...or whatever.

If you find this study guide is useful, or have any suggestions, please let us know when we come to your school. We look forward to seeing you at the show!

Yours truly,

*Kathy & John*

## The Company

Founded in 1978 by John Nolan and Kathy MacLellan, Rag & Bone's shows include *The Nightingale*, *A Promise is a Promise*, *The Story of Holly & Ivy*, *Felicity Falls*, *The Light Princess*, *Zoom at Sea*, *The Tempest*, *The Flying Canoe*, *The Last Polar Bears*, *Owl at Home* and *The Doll's House*. Rag & Bone has been awarded a Citation of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry from UNIMA-USA, the international puppetry association.

Kathy MacLellan is an award winning writer, performer and puppet-maker. Kathy has written over fifty television scripts, including episodes of *Under the Umbrella Tree*, *Theodore Tugboat*, and *Mr. Dressup*.

Actor, puppeteer, and designer John Nolan has built sets, props and puppets for stage and television, and has appeared on television and in many theatres, including GCTC, The National Arts Centre, Opera Lyra, Odyssey Theatre and Skeleton Key Theatre. He played Jackson on YTV's *Crazy Quilt*.

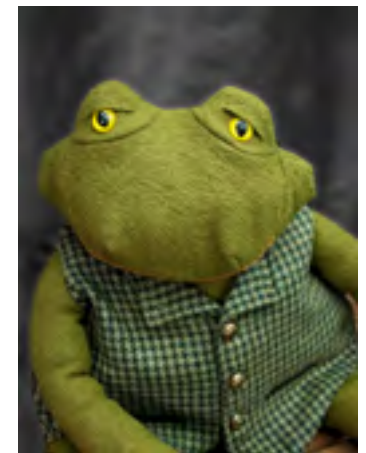
Kathy & John have also taught many puppet-making and drama workshops in schools across Ontario.



*The Last Polar Bears*



*A Promise is a Promise*



*The Wind in the Willows*



## Making the Show

We spent a lot of time developing ideas about the stories, the characters and the setting. We got ideas from our own children, from their friends, and just from talking about how we wanted the show to be. Once we had an idea of what the show should be like, Kathy wrote the script.

The longest part of the process was making the puppets and designing the show. What should the set look like? What should the puppets be like? What should they be made out of? How big should they be? How should the puppeteer hold them?

We decided to have soft-sculptured puppets, like bed-time toys, with a background of quilts and pillows.

Once we'd decided these things, we had to make everything: John made the props for the show: the little houses, the cloud, the ladder; Kathy set to work on the puppets.

The puppets that we use in *Felicity Falls* are sewn from fabric and stuffed. To make the weasels, for example, Kathy began by looking at lots of photos and drawings of weasels. Weasels have long, thin faces that come to a point at the nose. Kathy drew the face in profile, and that drawing became the basis for the first part of the paper pattern.

Then she had to draw other body parts: the small round ears, a triangle for under the jaw, a long thin body and short legs and arms. She laid the paper pattern on the fabric: brown arctic fleece for the upper body and white or grey for the jaw, neck and underarms. Then she cut out the fabric, sewed each body part together, turned it right side out and stuffed the head and body with polyester fibrefill.

Finally, Kathy sewed the various body parts to each other, added glass craft eyes and plastic eyelashes, and made clothes for them.

The third stage was to rehearse the show. In rehearsal, we had to decide how the puppets should talk, and what actions they should perform. We blocked the play: that is, we planned all the movements. Of course, we also had to learn our lines. We also decided what sound effects and musical instruments we'd use in the play.

The way that we work puppets in most of our shows is called open manipulation. The performers are more like storytellers than puppeteers, working the puppets and narrating the story in full view of the audience. We often describe it as “using puppets to tell stories in the same way that children play with toys”.

More ideas develop and grow once the show gets on the road, but most of the words and movements are set in rehearsal.



*Willemina in her wedding gown*



## The Stories in the Show

*A group of animals find a new place to live in the Ottawa valley. In a series of short stories, the show follows their everyday lives as they build their home and their community. Here are the stories:*

**O**NCE UPON A TIME a group of animals had to find a new place to live. They crossed grey, rocky mountains and found a green valley, a blue river & a small waterfall.

The valley had everything they needed, so they built houses there, and a mill—and they called their village Felicity Falls.

They had lots of sunny days, and lots of rainy days. Rain helped the crops grow (especially the carrots, for the rabbits).

One time it rained really hard, and all of their roofs started to leak. Everyone in the village crowded into the Rabbits' tiny kitchen. It was so crowded that every time anyone moved they bumped into a porcupine, and porcupines are prickly, but that was okay, porcupines are supposed to be prickly.

When it was time to go home, everyone was glad that they had such good neighbours to help them out.

After the rain, there were flowers everywhere in the village—especially apple blossoms. Rod Rabbit got busy fixing his roof, and Rose Rabbit, his seven year old daughter, had a friend over: Tansy Weasel.

Rose's little brother Jack was going berry picking with their mom, Rhapsody Rabbit, and Jack asked Rose to look after his teddy. Rose agreed, but Tansy wanted to play hide the teddy with it, and before they knew it, the teddy was lost.

When Jack and Rhapsody came home, Rose and Tansy were pretty worried, but then, an almost magical thing happened: a breeze blew through the leaves of the apple tree where Tansy had hidden the

teddy. The breeze knocked the teddy out of the tree and right into Jack's lap.

It was a good thing they found Jack's teddy, because he really needs it to get to sleep.

One night, just when Rod and Rhapsody were going to sleep, they heard a noise: Jack had fallen out of his crib. He refused to go back into it, so Rod and Rhapsody took him into their bed.

It took a while to get to sleep, and when they finally did, Rose came in. She had a growing pain, so Rhapsody went back to Rose's bed with her, to rub her leg for her.

Then Rhapsody fell asleep and Rose felt crowded, so she got in bed with her father and Jack.

Rose went right to sleep, but she started to dream about flying. Little Jack meanwhile, was dreaming about swimming lessons.

All this flying and swimming made it difficult for their father Rod to sleep, so he got up and went to find another place to sleep.

In the morning, when Rose went to the bathroom, she heard a terrible noise. It sounded like a bear growling in the bathroom. She ran back to get her mother.

When Rhapsody pushed open the bathroom door, they saw Rod. He'd been sleeping in the bathtub and snoring.

"That's not a bear, that's Daddy!" the children cried, jumping into the tub and all over Rod. "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!" Another day had begun in the Rabbit family.

As summer turned to fall, Rose was out playing in a field near her house, when she saw an amazing thing. It was a hot air balloon.

There was a weasel in the balloon, a travelling salesman named Waldo Weasel. He was a wonderful weasel, and soon everyone in the village loved him, especially Willemina Weasel, Tansy's aunt.

Waldo and Willemina decided to get married, and everyone was invited to the wedding.

Waldo and Willemina stayed in the village. They started the first store, and they started a family.

All this happened a long time ago. Most of the animals are grandparents now. When they think back on when they first came to Felicity Falls, they know now that what they found, what they made for themselves, is what they were looking for from the beginning: a home.





## Vocabulary

**FELICITY:** 1: the quality or state of being happy, esp: great happiness

b: an instance of happiness 2: something that causes happiness 3: a pleasing faculty esp. in art or language: aptness 4: an apt expression

### VOCABULARY LIST:

Many of these are simple words, and in the show they are used in a way that makes their meaning clear, but some concepts may be new to some students.

<i>felicity</i>	<i>cartwheel</i>	<i>amazing</i>
<i>blizzard</i>	<i>shed</i>	<i>travelling</i>
<i>valley</i>	<i>hammer</i>	<i>salesman</i>
<i>raft</i>	<i>ladder</i>	<i>aunt</i>
<i>waterfall</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>flower girl</i>
<i>prickly</i>	<i>berry picking</i>	<i>ring bearer</i>
<i>carrot top</i>	<i>lemonade</i>	<i>matron of honour</i>
<i>mill</i>	<i>breeze</i>	<i>best man</i>
<i>shingles</i>	<i>snake</i>	<i>bridesmaid</i>
<i>neighbours</i>	<i>blueberries</i>	<i>bride</i>
<i>apple blossoms</i>	<i>music box</i>	<i>groom</i>
<i>organize</i>	<i>crib</i>	<i>kalimba</i>
<i>tools</i>	<i>snoring</i>	<i>sieve</i>
<i>materials</i>	<i>growing pain</i>	<i>xylophone</i>
<i>leap frog</i>	<i>snugly</i>	
<i>somersault</i>	<i>bear</i>	

# Musical Beds

*In a golden valley near a blue waterfall, a group of animal families live together in a little village. They call their village Felicity Falls, because felicity means happiness...*



Felicity Falls is beautiful at night. Rod and Rhapsody Rabbit look at the moon every night before they go to bed....

“Goodnight moon,” says Rod.

“Goodnight Rod,” answers the moon, “goodnight Rhapsody.”

“Goodnight moon,” says Rhapsody.

After that, they look at their children: Rose, sleeping in her bed, and Jack in his crib. Jack is getting a little big for that crib.

“He’s really not a baby any more,” says Rod.

“He’ll always be a baby to me,” replies Rhapsody.



Then Rod and Rhapsody get into bed. Sometimes they have a little trouble arranging the blankets. First Rod pulls them all to his side, and then Rhapsody turns over, taking them all to her side.

One night, they pulled the blankets back and forth so much that Rod fell out of bed.

“Rod!” said Rhapsody, “are you all right? I’m sorry dear.”

“I’m fine,” he answered, getting back into bed. “It was my fault. Goodnight dear.”

“Goodnight dear,” said Rhapsody.

Rod went right to sleep, and started to snore. Rod’s snore was loud. It was a kind of a roar, or a growl, the kind of a noise a bear might make. Rhapsody sat up.

“Rod dear,” she said, tapping him gently on the shoulder, “Rod dear, you’re snoring.”

Rod sat up quickly. “I’m boring?”

“No dear,” said Rhapsody. “Snoring.”

“Oh,” said Rod, “snoring. I’m sorry dear.”

“That’s all right,” she said, “goodnight, dear.”

“Goodnight,” he answered. They both went to sleep and for a moment, all was quiet.



Suddenly, they heard a strange noise. It was something like “bubble ba bump bump Whoo,” or “buddle da clump clump Wee!”. No, wait. It was more like “duddle da dump dump Waa!” Rhapsody jumped out of bed.

“That was Jack!” she cried. They ran to Jack’s room.

When they got there, Jack wasn’t in his crib. Where was he?

“I’ll check Rose’s room!” said Rhapsody, as she raced out of the room.

Rod looked in the hall, behind the curtains, under the pillows, and finally, under Jack’s crib.

“Aha!” he said, just as Rhapsody returned from Rose’s room.

“Did you find him?” she asked.

“Sh!” said Rod, and he pointed under the crib.

There was Jack, asleep on the floor. Very carefully, they picked him up, put him back in his crib, and started to tiptoe out of the room.



“Is it up time?” said a happy, wide awake voice. It was Jack.

“No, no, Jack,” said Rhapsody. “It’s still bed time, crib time. Goodnight dear.”

“No crib! No crib!” said Jack. “I can get out my crib!”

He showed them how he could put one leg up on the rail, lean over and fall out. Rod caught him just in time.

“He’s too big for his crib,” said Rhapsody. “What can we do?”

“Take him into our bed?” asked Rod.

“Hooray!” said Jack. “Mommy and Daddy’s bed! Hooray!”

“Well, all right, Jack,” said Rod, “but just for tonight.”



It took some time to settle down. First Rod took all the blankets, then Rhapsody rolled over, and Rod fell out of bed with a thunk. He was fine, though. He got back in bed, and all was quiet until he started to snore.

“Daddy, you’re snoring,” said Jack.

“Snoring? Oh. I’m sorry,” answered his father.

Soon, all three rabbits were sound asleep. Then Rose came in.

“Mom,” she said, “Mom, I have a sore leg.”

Rhapsody woke up. “What?” Then she saw Rose.

“Oh, Rose.”

“Mom,” repeated Rose. “I have a sore leg.”

“Oh dear,” said Rhapsody. “It’s probably a growing pain. Would you like me to rub it for you?”

“Yes, please” said Rose, so they both went back to Rose’s bed.

Now Rose had a very nice little room, and a very nice little bed that was just the right size for one nice little rabbit.

At first it was wonderful to have her Mom in bed with her, very cosy and snugly. Rhapsody rubbed her leg, and soon it felt much better. But then Rhapsody went to sleep, and Rose started to feel a little bit crowded.

“I think I’ll go back to Mommy and Daddy’s bed,” she said.



There was lots of room in Mommy and Daddy’s bed. Rose just had to push Daddy over a bit, and then she went right to sleep. She went right to sleep, but she started to dream about flying: flying all around the world, with her own little wings.

Jack, meanwhile, was dreaming about swimming—swimming on his back, with a good strong kick: kick, kick, kick kick kick.

Well, that's what they were dreaming about, but this is what was really happening: one of Rose's legs landed on Rod's tummy. Then both of Jack's feet kick kick kicked into his back. Then Rose's arm flopped on her father's chest and he felt Jack's little feet kick kick kicking him softly in the head.

Rod got up, and went to find somewhere else to sleep.

In the morning, the sun came up on another beautiful day in Felicity Falls. Jack woke up.

"Wose!" he said. Rose woke up. She was surprised to see Jack in the bed with her.

"I wonder where our parents are?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Jack, "wet's wook for them." He started looking under the pillows and blankets, and under the bed.

"Wait a minute," said Rose, "last night Mommy was asleep in my bed. Maybe she's still there."

"Wet's go see," said Jack.



Rhapsody was having a wonderful sleep in Rose's bed, but she woke up pretty quickly when two little rabbits started jumping on the bed.

"Good morning Mommy," said Rose, and Jack said, "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy!" as he hopped up and down all over her.

"What?" said Rhapsody, sleepily. "Oh, good morning children."

And they all had a nice snuggle together.

But then Jack said, "Where's Daddy?"

"I don't know," replied Rhapsody, "Isn't he in bed? What time is it?"

"Morning time!" hopped Jack. "Morning time, morning time, up up up time!"

"I'll be back in a minute," said Rose, "I have to go to the bathroom."



When Rose got to the bathroom, the door was closed and from behind the door came a terrible noise. It was a kind of a roar, or a growl, the kind of a noise you might hear if there was a big, scary bear in the bathroom. Rose ran back to Rhapsody.

"Mommy, mommy!" she called, "there's something terrible in the bathroom! I think it's a bear!"

Rhapsody got up. "A bear in our bathroom?" she said. "I don't think so. Let's go see."

"Okay, Mommy," said Jack, "we're right behind you!"

When they got to the bathroom, they heard a loud roar.

“Oh no!” said Jack and Rose together. “There is a bear in the bathroom!”

They made so much noise that Rod, who was sleeping in the bathtub, woke up.

“A bear in the bathroom?” he said, “Oh no!”

The bathroom door opened, and Rhapsody looked in.

“Rhapsody, be careful!” whispered Rod, “there’s a bear in the bathroom!”

“That’s not a bear,” said Jack, “that’s Daddy! Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!”

“Good morning Daddy!” said Rose, and the two children hopped into the tub and started jumping happily all over their father.

“It’s morning time, morning time,” sang Jack, “up, up, up time!”



That night, there was a surprise for Jack: a real bed. Rod, Rhapsody and Rose all tucked him in and he went right to sleep.

And that night, the moon over Felicity Falls smiled down on the whole Rabbit family as they all slept all night long.



# The Real Animals

The animals in *Felicity Falls* are the sort that walk, talk, and go to school, but you might like to tell your class about the real animals that our characters are based on.



## WEASEL (*belette f.*)

There are 67 different kinds of animals that belong to the weasel family, including mink, ferret, ermine, fisher, martin and wolverine. Weasels live all over the world, except Australia and Antarctica.

They have long, thin bodies, short feet, thick necks, and pointed heads with small, round ears. They

often have dark brown upper bodies with white underparts; some northern species turn completely white in the winter.

Weasels are useful to farmers because they eat mice, but they do not make good pets.



## PORCUPINE (*pork-épic, m.*)

Canada's second largest rodent has a stout, black and white body with up to 30,000 sharp, slightly barbed quills on upper parts and tail.

Porcupines do not hibernate, and are usually nocturnal and solitary, but they sometimes share good dens or feeding areas. They eat bark, buds, and the leaves and twigs of trees and other plants.

RABBIT (*lapin, m.*)

Their are actually 18 different kinds of rabbits and hares, and sometimes the names are confusing— Jackrabbits are actually hares; and the Belgian hare is a rabbit.

Baby rabbits are born blind, helpless and hairless, while young hares are born furred, with eyes open and can hop minutes after birth.

The best known rabbits are cottontails, found in Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba; and the common or Old World rabbit, found in central Europe.

The Old World rabbit is gregarious, living in large colonial burrows, or warrens, which it digs itself.

The North American eastern cottontail tends to be mostly solitary, and does not dig its own burrows, but uses surface resting places, or forms, or the burrows of other animals.





# Rag & Bone

[WWW.RAGANDBONE.CA](http://WWW.RAGANDBONE.CA)

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